(e) the steps taken in that regard;

(f) whether any safeguards have been provided therein to control the rising prices of medicines and pharmaceutical products, particularly life-saving drugs; and

(g) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (g) Government have recently announced the "Pharmaceutical Policy-2002". The main objectives of this Policy are, *inter-alia*, ensuring abundant availability at reasonable prices within the country of good quality essential pharmaceuticals of mass consumption and strengthening the indigenous capability for cost effective quality production. The policy provides for identifying the drugs for price regulation out of the basket of the items appearing in the National Essential Drug List and those considered important from the point of view of their use in various Health Programmes, in emergency care etc,. There would be monitoring of price movement in other cases.

Exposure to hazardous chemicals around Union Carbide

193. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scientific survey conducted by Green Peace has shown that the residents around Union Carbide of India Ltd. (UCIL) are still exposed to the hazardous chemicals and are suffering from various health problems;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) what protective measures have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Yes Sir,

(b) The Green Peace conducted an environmental survey within and surrounding the former Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) factory. The survey showed contamination of land and groundwater with toxic wastes.

(c) According to the information given by the State Government of

Madhya Pradesh, they are in touch with the Ministry of Defence to help them in the removal of toxic wastes from the site of Union Carbide India Limited.

Dismantling of Drug Price Control Order

194. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to dismantle the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO);

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have received any memorandum against the said decision;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether it is likely to result in prices of drugs, including life-saving drugs, spiralling beyond the reach of the common man; and

(f) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (f) Do not arise in view of reply to (a), as above.

Amount deposited by drug companies with NPPA

†195. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 2775, given in the Rajya Sabha on 17th August, 2001 and state:

(a) The names of drug companies and the amount deposited by them with national Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) till 31st January, 2002, on account of over-charging for drugs; and

(b) by when the entire amount would be recovered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Till the 31st January, 2002, an amount of Rs. 604.092 lakhs has been recovered by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) from fourteen companies on account of overcharging for drugs. In some cases, the companies have filed

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.